Claims

[c1]   A method for tracking the effectiveness of an advertising channel for use with a telephonic sales market, including the acts of: advertising a telephonic number for a product or service, said advertisement including an identifier; routing calls to the telephonic number via telephonic routing system to a set of first locations, based on a first algorithm generated by a computational system operatively connected and in communication with said telephonic number routing; procuring said identifier from a caller and placing said identifier into a database; routing said identifier to said computational system and updating a database capable of being accessed by said computational system indicating performance information representative of the effectiveness of said advertisement.

[c2]   A method for routing a customer call to a particular vendor comprising: providing a phone number to a customer, wherein said number is linked with a plurality of consumer category codes, and wherein said customer makes said customer call by dialing said phone and entering one of said plurality of consumer category codes; determining which of said plurality of consumer category codes is entered by said customer; associating said customer call with a consumer category based on which of said plurality of consumer category codes is entered; creating a consumer category database, wherein said consumer category database contains at least one vendor related with said consumer category; selecting one of said at least one vendor to produce said particular vendor, wherein said particular vendor is selected based on a bidding factor, and wherein said bidding factor comprises a bid made to a provider of said phone number; and displaying a source to said particular vendor, wherein said source provides at least some detail on how said phone number is provided to

said customer.

[c3]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said bidding factor further comprises a preferred vendor status.

[c4]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said bidding factor further comprises a geographical limiter.

[c5]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said bidding factor further comprises availability of vendor in said category database.

[c6]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said bidding factor further comprises a financial range provided by said customer

[c7]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said bidding factor further comprises a keyword distinction selected by said particular vendor.

[c8]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said consumer category contains a geographical limitation parameter.

[c9]   The method as recited in claim 8, wherein said consumer category codes provide a geographical limitation to said geographical limitation parameter.

[c10]   The method as recited in claim 9, wherein said customer provides a geographical limitation to said geographical limitation parameter.

[c11]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said customer enters a plurality of said plurality of consumer category codes.

[c12]   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said customer call is dialed automatically and at least one of said plurality of consumer category codes is entered automatically by said customer choosing said

advertisement

[c13]   The method recited in claim 1, wherein said phone number and at least one of said plurality of consumer category codes is provided to said customer via an advertisement.

[c14]   The method recited in claim 13, wherein said source details said advertisement.

[c15]   The method recited in claim 1, wherein said advertisement is via the Internet.

[c16]   The method recited in claim 1, wherein said customer call is over the Internet.

[c17]   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said phone number is toll-free.

[c18]   A method for assisting a user in the procurement of a keyword for placing an online advertisement on at least one search engine including: advertising a toll-free number for a product or service sold using said toll-free number, said advertisement including an identifier; routing calls to the toll-free number to a set of first locations, based on a first algorithm; procuring said identifier from a caller and placing said identifier into a database; accessing performance data, said performance data related to said at least one search engine; determining the relative cost of said advertising channel for said at least one product; and providing a price target for acquisition of said advertisement.

[c19]   The method recited in claim 18, wherein said determining step includes the following acts: retrieving a desired margin for a sale of a set of at least one product; and applying a set of criteria in order to perform said providing of said keyword price target based on said desired margin, said

applying including evaluating said performance data.

[c20]   The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said desired margin is based on a percentage of a cost of a placed call.

[c21]   The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said desired margin is based on a net margin of said at least one product.

[c22]   The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said applying a set of criteria includes the act of linking with a financial software package.

[c23]   The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said performance data includes at least data regarding keyword to calls placed ratios.

[c24]   A method for acquiring at least one customer procurement tool accessed over the Internet for a telephonic assisted sale including the steps of: tracking performance data related to one or more customer procurement tools; loading a set of at least one financial goal for at least one product; said loading including accessing at least one financial algorithm; analyzing said performance data and said at least one financial goal to calculate a target range; and placing an offer to acquire said at least one customer procurement tool, wherein said customer procurement tool is a keyword.

[c25]   The method as recited in claim 24, wherein said acquiring is bidding on an electronic auction over a network and said placing is conducted electronically.